

# C·A·A·S·P

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS



“If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer.”  
Henry David Thoreau

Thoughts concerning Bill No. 6504 An Act Concerning Alternative School Programs by William Scalise President of the Connecticut Association of Alternative Schools and Programs.

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen of the General Assembly. It is my pleasure to address this Assembly concerning the Bill No. 6504. As a representative of the Connecticut Association of Alternative Schools and Programs (CAASP) with 32 years of experience teaching in alternative programs I would like to express the thoughts of many of our members on this Bill. I would also like to acknowledge representatives from the Center for Children’s Advocacy who have met with CAASP several times over the past 2 years and discussed issues related to the implementation of alternative education programs.

I would like to point out that of the thirty or so programs participating in CAASP no two are identical. Each alternative program began as a solution to unique problems of the host districts. Most of these programs are schools of choice and are housed off campus. These programs have highly qualified staff members who care about the students they serve and are interested in developing their own niche, which allows students to take pride in their learning environment.

In the above Bill it is important to distinguish between placement programs and programs of choice. Informed parental consent is an important part of all programs of choice. Student and parent interviews precede placement and are important to maintaining a student’s achievement in the program. Placement programs have developed recently as a cost saving measure within districts, which have high out of district placement. The success of these programs, in my opinion, is relative to the dedication of the staff and the resources provided by the host districts.

CAASP is also concerned about the equitable distribution of resources mentioned in the Bill. Successful alternative programs tend to be more resource intensive than the sending school. This may require teachers doing more outside of their certification areas to provide all of the requirements for a high school diploma. Again, it is the caring nature of the staff that makes these programs a safe environment for student learning. To fill positions to meet certification requirements may undermine the tenets of the alternative schools. This may require the State Department of Education to provide certification for Alternative Education Teaching.

In conclusion, I would like to offer the Connecticut Association of Alternative Schools and Programs as a resource to the General Assembly and any district to provide information about alternative program development. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this issue.

William Scalise, President CAASP

President: William Scalise –Killingly -860-974-1832  
Vice President: Rick Rumsey Putnam 860-963-6941  
Secretary: Steve Craig – Killingly – 860-779-6660  
Treasurer: Wayne Theriault Milford 203-878-2604  
Conference Coordinator: Mark Hill Southington 860-628-3379  
Past President – Vicki Gustavson – Wallingford-203-949-9222

[www.caasp.org](http://www.caasp.org)